

From an early age, Joanne learned that the rewards we receive are from the work we do. She has carried her concern and compassion for children to her work at the Maryland General Assembly where she is one of the most vocal and respected legislators and where she has been able to implement policies to better life for youngsters. She was an original sponsor of the Primary Seat Belt Law which serves as a national model for children's car seats and seat belt laws. She has gained the reputation as always being there for her constituents, whether it is help to get more funding for public education or safer streets in their community, and always takes positive action.

One of her proudest achievements has been the establishment of the not-for-profit organization known as SAFE STREETS 2000. This program, designed to educate and strengthen our communities and organizations, has helped many become more knowledgeable of available resources in the prevention, intervention and rehabilitation of senseless violence. For this work, Delegate Benson was profiled on the front page of the Washington Post and the Prince George's Journal and was featured on Nightline with Ted Koppel and Night Watch with Charles Rose.

Her endless commitment to children has earned her many other awards: For the Love of Children Award from the Kiwanis Club of the Capitol Area; Outstanding Educator from Prince George's County Schools, Who's Who Among Notable Educators in Maryland, Woman of the Year from Metropolitan Business and Professional Women, Humanitarian Award from Zeta Phi Beta and Outstanding Community Service Award from Las Amigas.

There are so many accomplishments and so many awards, but anyone who knows Joanne knows the things which make her the happiest and the proudest are the small unnoticed acts of kindness. Joanne, you are blessed with an irresistible spirit which is transmitted to all you touch. And we are all so grateful for all you have done. We thank you for your friendship, your leadership and your commitment to improving the lives of children and all the citizens of Prince George's County and the State of Maryland. We salute your 40 years of outstanding and dedicated service to the Prince George's County School System.

PUBLIC SAFETY ACT

HON. TED STRICKLAND

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2003

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the Public Safety Act, a bill designed to put a stop to the privatization of an extremely important public safety responsibility of government: the incarceration of criminals.

The Public Safety Act, which I have introduced in each of the last two Congresses, enjoys the wide support of many groups that represent the interests of correctional officers. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), as well as several other prison interest groups, all support this legislation.

When governments contract out their responsibility to incarcerate inmates to private prison corporations, taxpayers lose much of the valuable oversight that they have of government agencies. Nevertheless, taxpayers are still forced to assume much of the financial and legal liability associated with the operation of private prisons. If there are riots or breakouts, local government authorities are often called in to handle the situation. Furthermore, when a private prison official violates an inmate's rights, the taxpayers from the community—not the prison corporation—foot the bill for the lawsuit. To address these growing concerns, I will be reintroducing the Public Safety Act, which would prohibit the privatization of federal prisons. The bill also would prohibit state and local governments from using any federal funds made available to them for the purpose of providing core correctional services (such as the housing, safe-guarding, protecting, and disciplining of inmates) to contract out those services to private corporations.

A common argument used by privateers is that the private sector can incarcerate prisoners more cheaply, thereby saving taxpayer dollars. Having worked in a prison, however, I know that the easiest way to cut costs in a correctional facility is to cut the wages and benefits of the personnel. The result of this is to employ a poorly trained staff with little experience, creating a danger for everyone who works in the facility and everyone who lives in the surrounding community. The result of cutting expenses in corrections is cutting corners, and cutting corners is unacceptable when it comes to protecting public safety.

My bill will prohibit the Federal Government from contracting out its responsibility to incarcerate criminals. The bill would also prevent States and local governments from using federal funds to contract out core correctional services to private corporations. Even as I speak, the Bureau of Prisons is asking Congress to appropriate money for a new contract facility for female inmates, which is a giant step in the wrong direction from the BOP's request from last year for dollars to build a government facility for female inmates. The Office of Management and Budget is also forcing the BOP to contract out part of its own workforce. The assault on public safety is not only at the federal level, however. There is even greater concern at the state and local levels that governments experiencing tough financial times may contract out their responsibilities with the hope of saving money. The Public Safety Act will prevent States and local governments from using federal dollars in the form of Homeland Security block grants or otherwise to forfeit their responsibility to administer justice.

I urge all my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation so that we can ensure that the Federal government fulfills its responsibility to provide for public safety, and I hope that the Public Safety Act will be considered by the House of Representatives soon.

IN RECOGNITION OF TEACHERS INDUCTED INTO THE NATIONAL TEACHERS HALL OF FAME

HON. JERRY MORAN

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 6, 2003

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, on National Teacher Day, to recognize this year's inductees into the National Teachers Hall of Fame in Emporia, Kansas. All of us have had special teachers in our lives, and we are forever indebted to them for their motivation, their compassion, and their desire to see students achieve their full potential. Now in its 14th year, the Hall of Fame continues its mission to honor exceptional teachers and promote excellence in teaching. Congratulations to the 2003 inductees: Larry Statler, Cynthia Jones, Ruth Ann Gaines, Kathleen McGrath, and Carol Strickland.

At Santa Teresa Elementary in San Jose, California, Larry Statler has used his talents to create the Discovery program. Discovery is a collaborative effort between special and general educators. Although Larry specializes in special education, his superintendent calls him 'a man for all children.'

Cynthia Jones, a third and fourth grade teacher at Cason Lane Academy in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, has shared her love of education around the world. She has presented original research in Durham, England, and in Washington, DC. She participated in the White House Conference on Education from 1995 to 2001 and also traveled to Japan in 1999 as a Fulbright Scholar.

According to a former student, Ruth Ann Gaines takes teaching beyond the classroom. At East High School in Des Moines, Iowa, she has created the 'Sisters for Success' program, a mentoring organization for African-American high school girls to build self esteem and facilitate academic success. She has also created the Leadership Council, a school organization that helps address problems of diversity in the school and community.

Kathleen McGrath of Ocala, Florida, loves knowledge and conveys that to her students through her dedication to teaching. Every student TRIES in her classroom. This motto stands for Trust, Relationships, Involvement, Expectations, and Success. Kathleen is also a three-time recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Fellowship in 1992, 1999, and 2001.

I am especially proud to recognize Carol Strickland, who is from Emporia in my home state of Kansas. Carol won the Kansas Teacher of the Year award in 1999 followed by the U.S. Department of State Secondary School Excellence Award in 2001. Her accomplishments include launching an Applied Communication class to help students with Limited English Proficiency transition from high school to the working world.

Larry, Cynthia, Ruth Ann, Kathleen, and Carol exemplify what it means to be a teacher—what it means to make a difference. These five inductees collectively have 143 years of teaching experience. I salute these men and women for their dedication to the youth of our country. It is my hope that they will find satisfaction in knowing the influence they have made on the lives of their students.